

Given a paragraph, the reader identifies words that carry emotional impact.

UNIT 7
Lesson 1
Critical Reading

TECHNICAL TALK

Authors use words with care. They know that certain words affect people strongly. If a writer wants you to become angry about something, he or she will use words that bring angry thoughts to mind. If he wants you to feel good about something, the writer will use pleasant words. Look at this example:

1. His room was in a state of complete disorder.
2. His room was just a messy pigpen.

See the difference? Sentence 1 makes a real mess sound pretty good. Sentence 2 makes a bad situation a lot worse than it really is.

TRY IT

Read the following paragraph and notice the words that are used to anger the reader.

TEENS ARE TERRIBLE



Teenagers are sometimes sloppy people. They leave their junk lying around wherever they happen to drop it. You can expect a trail of moldy socks, sticky pop cans, and smelly pizza boxes to follow them everywhere. They never hang up their clothes. They throw piles of rotting sneakers and other disgusting things in dark corners to mold. It's all a respectable person can do to live around these slobs.

Who would ever write such a thing? You can see hate hiding behind many of the underlined words. Check the words below that were used to make you believe teenagers are terrible.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> teenagers | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> hang |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> sloppy | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> clothes |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> junk | 11. <input type="checkbox"/> piles |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> happen | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> rotting |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> sticky | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> mold |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> smelly | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> respectable |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> boxes | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> person |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> follow | 16. <input type="checkbox"/> slobs |

Words that cause emotions in people are sometimes called "loaded words." In the paragraph about teenagers, the most loaded words are probably sloppy, junk, sticky, smelly, piles, rotting, mold, and slobs. If you changed these words you could make the whole paragraph more honest. Sometimes authors use words like this to get you stirred up. Loaded words are traps for people who do not take time to examine the facts and think.

Read the newscast below. Then pick one of the words or phrases below the paragraph to replace each numbered word. Select words or phrases to make the newscast more factual and less emotional.



RIP OFF!

Washington announced today that more money will be ① thrown down an old rat hole. ② Bureaucrats there are planning now to ③ throw away another 15 million dollars to make our lives safer. They are planning to put new signs up on narrow bridges at ④ gigantic cost to taxpayers. They have been ⑤ wasting money on these ⑥ useless signs for three years. The ⑦ big spenders say they will finish the project next year.

Select less loaded words for each of the underlined words and phrases in the paragraph.

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) wasted on a useless project | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) spent on an old project |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) Officials | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) Big spenders |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) waste | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) spend |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) substantial | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) huge |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) spending | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) throwing away |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) unneeded | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) no good |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> (a) officials | (or) | <input type="checkbox"/> (b) bureaucrats |

Now read the paragraph again with the new words. See the difference word selection can make?



GREAT PILOT AWES WATCHERS

The paragraphs below can be written two ways just by using different words in the blank spaces. You will find two word choices for each blank in the two columns below the paragraphs. Pick words for the first paragraph to make the dog look like a hero. Then fill the blanks in the second paragraph with the unused words. The second paragraph should make the whole event seem completely different.

DOG FLIES OWN HOUSE

Today the (1) _____ dog of comic fame flew his (2) _____ doghouse over Metropolis. Acting as (3) _____ as usual, he took off from the local airport, wearing his (4) _____ flying cap and goggles. His (5) _____ scarf trailing behind, the little critter zoomed (6) _____ over the city as thousands of people watched. After an hour of the (7) _____ flying demonstration, the (8) _____ returned to earth. The mayor met him on the ground to offer some (9) _____ remarks about his performance.

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- | | | |
|-------------------|------|-----------------|
| 1. heroic | (or) | black and white |
| 2. red-roofed | (or) | famed |
| 3. gallant | (or) | odd |
| 4. stupid looking | (or) | famous |
| 5. romantic | (or) | floppy |
| 6. wildly | (or) | daringly |
| 7. dangerous | (or) | unusual |
| 8. mutt | (or) | dog |
| 9. glowing | (or) | angry |

HOW DID YOU DO?

